

St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church
Moore Street, Adelaide



**An open, welcoming and inclusive community
in the heart of the City of Adelaide**

**Keeping Community
Spiritual Resources & Reflections**

Thursday 1 December 2022

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions will make it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship.

Sunday Mass is offered weekly at 10 am, and the church will also be open on Thursday between 11.30 am and 1 pm, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm. During Advent, there is also a reflection each Wednesday at 8 am.

The decision to return to worship in community, whether for private prayer, or the public celebration of the Word and Sacraments, is not a straightforward matter.

These newsletters are intended to keep our entire community informed on events in the life of the Parish, so we will continue to produce these news bulletins for now.



1. From Fr Steven - The Human Quest

The response to Saturday's forthcoming parish retreat has been encouraging. I suspect this is partly a reflection of a mood for change in the church and the wider community. This mood, which captures deep human aspirations, is often presented under the banner of "spiritual not religious".

This aspiration captures a deep sense of human searching, and it has real substance. For example, the theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes a plea for "religionless Christianity". Likewise, French philosopher Jacques Derrida explores "religion without religion".

Of course, we cannot do without institutions, however, we need healthy institutions. In other words, the institution of the church is not an end in itself, but a servant of divine love. In the name of this deep human quest, then, I think it is important that we re-calibrate the way that we interpret the concept of 'future' in relation to Advent.

Advent is a time of waiting and wondering, expecting the new, and hoping for the best. Of course, many of the biblical texts used in Advent are complex. Many of them are written in the apocalyptic genre, which is like a code, written for the faithful hoping for the future. Like the people of Ukraine, facing a tyrant, these ancient faith communities are thinking of the immediate future.

The roots of the apocalyptic go back to the third century BCE book of Daniel (11:32), and resistance to the Seleucid tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The apocalyptic genre culminates in

the book of Revelation, where hope is nurtured in the face of Roman oppression (e.g., arguably Nero). Critically, Jesus identifies with this tradition when he uses the term “the son of man” to describe himself and his mission. The term comes from Daniel and is reliably translated today as “the human one”.

In both cases, Daniel and Revelation, the sense of the future is ‘the immediate future’. That is, they expected the new to burst into the now. Unfortunately, we have lost that sense of immediacy, as the multi-layered language has often been misinterpreted literally.

Our parish is in good heart. And there are signs of the new among us. These are Advent signs, full of promise and possibility. In fact, Advent is a season of preparation, promise, and new possibilities. So, we can expect divine inspiration and empowerment, in the here and now.

Fr Steven

2. COVID-19 Update

With the significant increase in COVID-19 infections being reported, the Parish Council has again considered the precautions we have put in place within our worshipping community. Parish Council, noting that we (like many church communities) have a number of older folk and others who might be regarded as vulnerable among our number, has agreed that we will continue to take a conservative approach for the time being, and to encourage precautions including Distancing, Ventilation and Facemasks: **DVM** for short. Distancing means maintaining a sensible distance of 1.5 metres between individuals or family groups; Ventilation means leaving some doors and/or windows open to allow a flow of air—and we have air conditioning, so we will neither freeze nor boil!—and Facemasks are obvious.

3. Daily Prayer

Most Christian denominations have forms for prayer in the morning and the evening, and at other times of the day. Morning and Evening Prayer in *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pp 3-33) or a form for each day of the week (pp 383-424).

Online Resources

There is an online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play.

The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also available as a free app. The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at www.ibreviary.com and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day, especially in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

4. Reflections and Meditations

In addition to Fr Steven’s regular reflection in this newsletter, which is uploaded to the web page for wider accessibility, Fr Philip Carter’s meditations and spiritual reflections are presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelade.org/>.

To access these meditations, simply go to the blog and select the “Spirit matters” tab on the top. If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog, whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish’s Facebook page.

5. Advent Quiet Day/Retreat, Saturday 3 December

Life, loss, and hope (I’m spiritual but not religious)

On Saturday 3 December, from 10 am to 4 pm, we will have a Quiet Day/Retreat. Activities of this type, in addition to the weekly Sunday Mass, offer a dedicated time for reflection, and an opportunity for spiritual growth.

It has been entitled the day “**Life, loss, and hope (I’m spiritual but not religious)**”. In this retreat, which also has elements of a workshop, I introduce a developmental way of exploring the sacred. This recognizes the complexities of the human journey and the importance of developing our own sense of self. For example, for those from the Christian tradition, this can be about leaving the “Sunday School God” behind and developing an authentic sense of self, and a new sense of the sacred.

So, the workshop-retreat will consider the possibility of outgrowing inadequate and/or dysfunctional religious and family systems. The day will be a mix of positive interaction and times for quiet reflection. The key theme is the recognition that sometimes we need a new way of thinking to bring about personal change, and deep change involves a respectful attention to the experience of loss.

The day will begin at 10 and finish at 4 pm, and will include a light lunch. The cost is \$10 (\$5 concession). If you have any questions, please be in touch.

Bookings for the retreat should be made [via Eventbrite](#) or, if you do not have access, there is an attendance sheet available at the Church.

6. This Week in the Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate a notable Australian Anglican, Frances Perry, founder of the Royal Women’s Hospital, Melbourne (d. 1892), as well as St Francis Xavier, the monastic reformer Nicholas Ferrar, and the Early Church saints Nicholas of Myra, and Ambrose of Milan, bishop and teacher.

Frances (Fanny) Perry (1814-1892) was born in England and came to Australia in 1847 when her husband, Charles Perry, was appointed as the first Bishop of Melbourne. On the long voyage from England, while the bishop led services and taught his clergy Greek, Mrs Perry took Scripture classes for the women and practised her benevolence on the steerage passengers.

In addition to the genteel expectations of the Bishop’s wife, along with the arduous work of accompanying him in his journeys, Mrs Perry took a great interest in the people and landscapes she encountered and published a collection of colourful letters under the pseudonym 'Richard Perry' as *Contributions to an Amateur Magazine in Prose and Verse* (London, 1857).



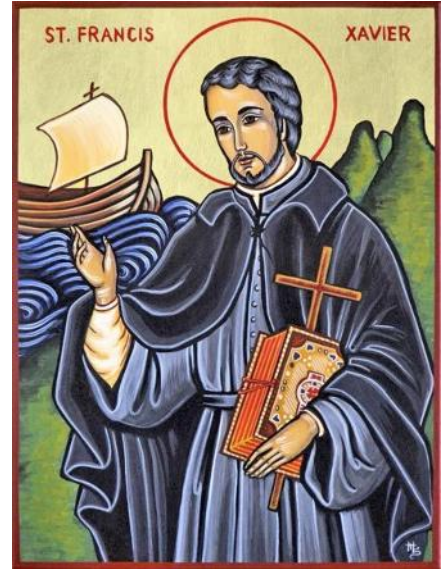
She took leading roles in the Governesses' Home, the Carlton Refuge, and the Melbourne Orphan Asylum. Her chief work, however, was as head of the committee that founded the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital – later the Royal Women's Hospital. She was first president from 1856 until Bishop Perry's retirement in 1874. Her memory is preserved in Frances Perry House at the Royal Women's Hospital.

St Francis Xavier (1506-1552).

Jesus asked, "What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Matthew 16:26a).

The words were repeated to Francis Xavier, then a young teacher of philosophy who had a highly promising academic career before him, by his good friend Ignatius López de Oñaz – whom we know as St Ignatius of Loyola. Xavier did not heed these words at once, but Ignatius' persistence eventually won him over. Francis joined Ignatius's emerging religious community, the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits.

Together at Montmartre they vowed poverty, chastity, obedience, and apostolic service according to the directions of the pope.



From Venice, where he was ordained a priest in 1537, Xavier went on to Lisbon and from there sailed to the East Indies, landing at Goa, on the west coast of India. For the next 10 years he undertook many missionary journeys, and served as provincial of the newly established Jesuit province of India.

Wherever he went, Xavier lived with the poorest people, sharing their food and rough accommodations. He spent countless hours ministering to the sick and the poor, particularly to lepers. Very often he had no time to sleep or even to say his daily prayers but, as we know from his letters, he was filled always with joy.

Xavier went through the islands of Malaysia, then up to Japan. He learned enough Japanese to preach to simple folk, to instruct, and to baptize, and to establish missions for those who were to follow him. From Japan he had dreams of going to China, but this plan was never realized. Before reaching the mainland, he died. His remains are enshrined in the Church of Good Jesus in Goa.

All of us are called to "go and preach to all nations". Our preaching is not necessarily on distant shores but to our families, our children, our husband or wife, our coworkers. And we are called to preach not with words, but by our everyday lives. Only by sacrifice, the giving up of all selfish gain, could Francis Xavier be free to bear the Good News to the world. Sacrifice is leaving yourself behind at times for a greater good, the good of prayer, the good of helping someone in need, the good of just listening to another. The greatest gift we have is our time. Francis Xavier gave his to others.

Nicholas Ferrar (1593-1637) was the guiding light of one of the most remarkable experiments in Christian community living in the history of Anglicanism. An English academic, courtier and businessman, he gave up his successful careers, was ordained a deacon and retreated with his extended family to the manor of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire), where they lived in community.

In 1625, Ferrar bought the deserted manor and village of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire. Little Gidding had been deserted since the Black Death in the 14th century. The following year he was ordained a deacon, and made it clear that he would not proceed to the priesthood. He pledged: "I will also by the help of my God, set myself with more care and diligence than ever to serve our good Lord God, as is all our duties to do, in all we may."

The first thing done at Little Gidding was to enter the church for prayer, ordering it to be cleaned and restored for worship before any attention was paid to the house. Little Gidding was in effect the only religious community in the Church of England between the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII and the revival of religious communities that came with the Oxford Movement.



The community at Little Gidding was suppressed by Cromwell in 1646, but remained in the Ferrar family. There was a revival of interest in Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, an Anglican religious community, was established at a meeting there in 1913. The Community of Christ the Sower, inspired by the example of Nicholas Ferrar, was founded there in the 1970s and finally came to an end in 1998. The Society of the Friends of Little Gidding was re-founded in 2004.

St Ambrose was born around 340 to a Roman Christian family. Legend has it that when Ambrose was just an infant, a swarm of bees landed on his face, and rather than injuring the child, left behind a drop of honey. To his father, this was a sign that Ambrose would become someone great with a wonderful sense for speaking.

One of his biographers observed that at the Last Judgment, people would still be divided between those who admired Ambrose and those who heartily disliked him. He emerges as the man of action who cut a furrow through the lives of his contemporaries. Even royal personages were numbered among those who were to suffer crushing divine punishments for standing in Ambrose's way.



Yet his sermons, his writings, and his personal life reveal him as an otherworldly man involved in the great issues of his day. Humanity for Ambrose was, above all, spirit. In order to think rightly of God and the human soul, the closest thing to God, no material reality at all was to be dwelt upon.

Ambrose exemplifies for us the truly catholic character of Christianity. He is steeped in the learning, law, and culture of the ancients and of his contemporaries. Yet, in the midst of active involvement in this world, this thought runs through Ambrose's life and preaching: The hidden meaning of the Scriptures calls our spirit to rise to another world.

St Nicholas was born in 270 and died in 343, and that is almost all we know for certain about him. Historically, we can pinpoint only the fact that Nicholas was the fourth-century bishop of Myra, a city in Lycia, a province of Asia Minor.

The absence of the “hard facts” of history is not necessarily an obstacle to the popularity of saints, as the devotion to Saint Nicholas shows. Both the Eastern and Western Churches honour him, and it is claimed that after the Blessed Virgin, he is the saint most pictured by Christian artists. And yet.

As with many of the saints, however, we are able to capture the relationship which Nicholas had with God through the admiration which Christians have had for him—an admiration expressed in the colourful stories which have been told and retold through the centuries.

Perhaps the best-known story about Nicholas concerns his charity toward a poor man who was unable to provide dowries for his three daughters of marriageable age. Rather than see them forced into prostitution, Nicholas secretly tossed a bag of gold through the poor man’s window on three separate occasions, thus enabling the daughters to be married. Over the centuries, this particular legend evolved into the custom of gift-giving on the saint’s feast. In the English-speaking countries, Saint Nicholas became, by a twist of the tongue, Santa Claus—further expanding the example of generosity portrayed by this holy bishop.



The critical eye of modern history makes us take a deeper look at the legends such as these. Might we utilize the lesson taught by his charity, look deeper at our approach to material goods in the Christmas season, and seek ways to extend our sharing to those in real need?

7. From the letters to Saint Ignatius by Saint Francis Xavier

Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel

We have visited the villages of the new converts who accepted the Christian religion a few years ago. No Portuguese live here the country is so utterly barren and poor. The native Christians have no priests. They know only that they are Christians. There is nobody to say Mass for them; nobody to teach them the Creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Commandments of God’s Law.

I have not stopped since the day I arrived. I conscientiously made the rounds of the villages. I bathed in the sacred waters all the children who had not yet been baptised. This means that I have purified a very large number of children so young that, as the saying goes, they could not tell their right hand from their left. The older children would not let me say my Office or eat or sleep until I taught them one prayer or another. Then I began to understand: “The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

I could not refuse so devout a request without failing in devotion myself. I taught them, first the confession of faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, then the Apostles’ Creed, the Our Father and Hail Mary. I noticed among them persons of great intelligence. If only someone could educate them in the Christian way of life, I have no doubt that they would make excellent Christians.

Many, many people hereabouts are not becoming Christians for one reason only: there is nobody to make them Christians. Again and again I have thought of going round the universities of Europe, especially Paris, and everywhere crying out like a madman, riveting the attention of those with more learning than charity: “What a tragedy: how many souls are being shut out of heaven and falling into hell, thanks to you!”

I wish they would work as hard at this as they do at their books, and so settle their account with God for their learning and the talents entrusted to them.

This thought would certainly stir most of them to meditate on spiritual realities, to listen actively to what God is saying to them. They would forget their own desires, their human affairs, and give themselves over entirely to God's will and his choice. They would cry out with all their heart: *Lord, I am here! What do you want me to do? Send me anywhere you like – even to India.*

8. An Extract from *Little Gidding* by T.S. Eliot

'Little Gidding' is the last of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets, and also his last significant poem. There is a sense in this poem of Eliot seeking to join the threads of his work together, to 'set a crown upon a lifetime's effort', as he puts it in 'Little Gidding' itself.

*There are three conditions which often look alike
 Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
 Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
 From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them, indifference
 Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
 Being between two lives - unflowering, between
 The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
 For liberation - not less of love but expanding
 Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
 From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country
 Begins as an attachment to our own field of action
 And comes to find that action of little importance
 Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,
 History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
 The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
 To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.
 Sin is Behovely, but
 All shall be well, and
 All manner of thing shall be well.
 If I think, again, of this place,
 And of people, not wholly commendable,
 Of not immediate kin or kindness,
 But of some peculiar genius,
 All touched by a common genius,
 United in the strife which divided them;
 If I think of a king at nightfall,
 Of three men, and more, on the scaffold
 And a few who died forgotten
 In other places, here and abroad,
 And of one who died blind and quiet,
 Why should we celebrate
 These dead men more than the dying?
 It is not to ring the bell backward
 Nor is it an incantation
 To summon the spectre of a Rose.
 We cannot revive old factions*

We cannot restore old policies
 Or follow an antique drum.
 These men, and those who opposed them
 And those whom they opposed
 Accept the constitution of silence
 And are folded in a single party.
 Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
 We have taken from the defeated
 What they had to leave us - a symbol:
 A symbol perfected in death.
 And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 By the purification of the motive
 In the ground of our beseeching.

9. St Ambrose writes to a new bishop ...

By the grace of your words win over your people

You have entered upon the office of bishop. Sitting at the helm of the Church, you pilot the ship against the waves. Take firm hold of the rudder of faith so that the severe storms of this world cannot disturb you. The sea is mighty and vast, but do not be afraid, for as Scripture says: *he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.*

The Church of the Lord is built upon the rock of the apostles among so many dangers in the world; it therefore remains unmoved. The Church's foundation is unshakeable and firm against the assaults of the raging sea. Waves lash at the Church but do not shatter it. Although the elements of this world constantly beat upon the Church with crashing sounds, the Church possesses the safest harbour of salvation for all in distress. Although the Church is tossed about on the sea, it rides easily on rivers, especially those rivers that Scripture speaks of: *The rivers have lifted up their voice.* These are the rivers flowing from the heart of the man who is given drink by Christ and who receives from the Spirit of God. When these rivers overflow with the grace of the Spirit, they lift up their voice.

There is also a stream which flows down on God's saints like a torrent. There is also a rushing river giving joy to the heart that is at peace and makes for peace. Whoever has received from the fullness of this river, like John the Evangelist, like Peter and Paul, lifts up his voice. Just as the apostles lifted up their voices and preached the Gospel throughout the world, so those who drink these waters begin to preach the good news of the Lord Jesus.

Drink, then, from Christ, so that your voice may also be heard. Store up in your mind the water that is Christ, the water that praises the Lord. Store up water from many sources, the water that rains down from the clouds of prophecy.

Whoever gathers water from the mountains and leads it to himself or draws it from springs, is himself a source of dew like the clouds. Fill your soul, then, with this water, so that your land may not be dry, but watered by your own springs.

He who reads much and understands much, receives his fill. He who is full, refreshes others. So Scripture says: *If the clouds are full, they will pour rain upon the earth.*

Therefore, let your words be rivers, clean and limpid, so that in your exhortations you may charm the ears of your people. And by the grace of your words win them over to follow your

leadership. Let your sermons be full of understanding. Solomon says: *The weapons of the understanding are the lips of the wise*; and in another place he says: *Let your lips be bound with wisdom*. That is, let the meaning of your words shine forth, let understanding blaze out. See that your addresses and expositions do not need to invoke the authority of others, but let your words be their own defence. Let no word escape your lips in vain or be uttered without depth of meaning.

10. On the Feast of St Nicholas - from St Augustine's Treatise on the Gospel of John

The strength of love ought to overcome the fear of death

When the Lord asks Peter if he loves him, he is asking something he already knows. Yet he does not ask only once, but a second and third time. Each time Peter's answer is the same: You know I love you. Each time the Lord gives him the same command: Tend my sheep.

Peter had denied Christ three times, and to counter this he must profess his faith three times. Otherwise his tongue would seem quicker to serve fear than love, and the threat of death would seem to have made him more eloquent than did the presence of life. If denying the shepherd was proof of fear, then the task of love is to tend his flock.

When those who are tending Christ's flock wish that the sheep were theirs rather than his, they stand convicted of loving themselves, not Christ. And the Lord's words are a repeated admonition to them and to all who, as Paul writes sadly, are seeking their own ends, not Christ's.

Do you love me? Tend my sheep. Surely this means: "If you love me, your thoughts must focus on taking care of my sheep, not taking care of yourself. You must tend them as mine, not as yours; seek in them my glory, not yours; my sovereign rights, not yours; my gain, not yours. Otherwise you will find yourself among those who belong to the 'times of peril,' those who are guilty of self-love and the other sins that go with that beginning of evils."

So the shepherds of Christ's flock must never indulge in self-love; if they do they will be tending the sheep not as Christ's but as their own. And of all vices this is the one that the shepherds must guard against most earnestly; seeking their own purposes instead of Christ's, furthering their own desires by means of those persons for whom Christ shed his blood.

The love of Christ ought to reach such a spiritual pitch in his shepherds that it overcomes the natural fear of death which makes us shrink from the thought of dying even though we desire to live with Christ. However distressful death may be, the strength of love ought to master the distress. I mean the love we have for Christ who, although he is our life, consented to suffer death for our sake.

Consider this: if death held little or no distress for us, the glory of martyrdom would be less. But if the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep, has made so many of those same sheep martyrs and witnesses for him, then how much more ought Christ's shepherds fight for the truth even to death and to shed their blood in opposing sin? After all, the Lord has entrusted them with tending his flock and with teaching and guiding his lambs.

With his passion for their example, Christ's shepherds are most certainly bound to cling to the pattern of his suffering, since even the lambs have so often followed that pattern of the Chief Shepherd in whose one flock the shepherds themselves are lambs. For the Good Shepherd who suffered for all mankind has made all mankind his lambs, since in order to suffer for them all he made himself a lamb.

11. Intentions for Your Daily Prayers

We pray throughout the week for the world and the church. These intentions may be helpful in your private or family prayers.

For the world. The leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome.

For the church. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of the Nyang (South Sudan). In our national church, pray for the Primate: Geoffrey Smith; General Synod: Anne Hywood; Assistant to the Primate: David Bassett; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Community Chaplain, the Revd Joan Claring-Bould.

For our local community. For the Collective and its ministry in the local community. For the Magdalene Centre, as it deals with the need to change the way it delivers services in order to safeguard the health of customers, staff and volunteers.

For those in need. Pray for all those who are troubled in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Olivia, Nance, Neil, Elaine and Edward.

For those who have died. Those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; those who have died as a result of COVID-19 and in other tragic circumstances; those who have died recently, especially Sylvia Bridgman, Peter Bird, and Heide, and those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time. ✠ *Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.*

For the saints. For the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, St Mary Magdalene, St Francis Xavier, St Nicholas, St Ambrose, and holy women and men of every time and place.

This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Thursday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

